



## Family School Connection

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To Our Connecticut Legislators:

As the Principal of Bielefield Elementary School in Middletown, CT, I am reaching out to you in response to the Governor's proposed program elimination of the Family School Connection program under the Office Of Early Childhood. This proposal would completely eliminate funding for Family School Connection at our school as well as 5 other high needs schools in Connecticut. I urge you to consider carefully the significant opportunity you have to ensure continued funding for this important program, particularly as they serve school-aged children most at risk of failing to achieve their academic goals and grade level expectations. The **FAMILY SCHOOL CONNECTION** program has been implemented in Title I schools identified as in need of improvement in some of Connecticut's highest poverty school districts. Bielefield School is now a **FOCUS SCHOOL** because of the achievement gap between the Hispanic subgroup and overall school's achievement level. This program provides critical support for students and families that would jeopardize the progress made to date if eliminated.

Family School Connection is a scientific research-based program with ten years of empirical data **DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVENESS**, supported by the University of Hartford's School of Social Research. In Middletown, 100% of the families have opted into the research program, understanding that data-driven decision making is necessary to achieve student academic success. The data shows that the children we are working with are making academic growth and we are helping to close the achievement gap at our schools. For example, from Spring to Fall of last year, of all the students we worked with in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who's reading fluency was at or above grade level grew by 30%. Our students in grades 1-5 increased an average of 3.5 reading levels in the 2014-2015 school year. Our home visitors work tirelessly with our communities most vulnerable families to help them get involved in their child's education; teach them positive parenting and discipline skills to help end the cycle of child abuse and neglect; and support our parents to be the best parent that each and every child deserves.

The research says that the more a parent is involved in their child's education, the higher their grades and graduation rates are. So if you are interested in closing the achievement gap and we know that parent involvement in schooling is helping children to be more successful academically, then let us continue to help give parents the tools they need to help their children. Again, please do not support the Governor's plan to eliminate the funds for the Family School Connection Program.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fournier, Principal  
Bielefield Elementary School